

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

October 19, 2023

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
United States Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

Secretary Mayorkas:

I am alarmed by reports that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) currently employs a former spokeswoman for the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as an officer charged with adjudicating U.S. immigration cases. According to reports and publicly available records, this employee, Nejwa Ali, has a documented history of making virulently antisemitic, pro-Hamas statements, including in the immediate aftermath of Hamas' savage attack on innocent American and Israeli civilians. These statements appear to cast severe doubt on her ability to impartially evaluate immigration cases. I am glad to see that she has now been placed on administrative leave—but that is not enough. If these reports are accurate, you must terminate her employment immediately.

Ms. Ali's reported statements make clear that she harbors intensely negative views against the State of Israel and supports the recent barbarism perpetrated against its citizens by Hamas terrorists. For example, following Hamas' October 7 terrorist attack, she reportedly posted on Instagram: "F*** Israel, the government, and its military. Are you ready for your downfall?"¹ She also reportedly posted an image depicting armed terrorists paragliding into Israel with the caption "Free PALESTINE." Her social media appears to contain numerous examples of anti-Israel and antisemitic statements, including "Israeli, American privilege is disgusting" and "F*** Israel and any Jew that supports Israel."

Ms. Ali's troubling personal views apparently carry into her professional life—including her roles at DHS. She previously worked as a public affairs officer at the PLO's office in Washington, D.C. before that office was shut down by the Trump Administration. In her current role, she reportedly works as an "Adjudication Officer" within U.S. Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) where she is tasked with "review[ing] and mak[ing] determinations on cases for immigration benefits," among other responsibilities.² Prior to this role, she reportedly worked as an "Asylum Officer" responsible for adjudicating asylum applications and conducting credible and reasonable fear screenings. Concerningly, Ms. Ali has explicitly linked her prejudicial views to her job. For instance, in one social media post associated with her name, she included the hashtags "#asylumseekers #palestine #refugeeswelcome"—suggesting that she may preference certain immigration cases over others at DHS. This is unacceptable.

¹ <https://www.dailywire.com/news/the-u-s-govt-hired-a-pro-hamas-plo-spokeswoman-to-handle-asylum-claims>

² <https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/careers/career-opportunities>

As Secretary, you must assure the American people that those charged with determining who enters the United States do so impartially and without prejudice. If the above reports are true and accurate, you must terminate Ms. Ali's employment at DHS without delay. Additionally, please provide answers to the following questions:

1. How many immigration cases involving Palestinians has Ms. Ali reviewed? For each case, please detail Ms. Ali's involvement and the final determination.
2. How many immigration cases involving Israelis or other Jewish applicants has Ms. Ali reviewed? For each case, please detail Ms. Ali's involvement and the final determination.
3. What safeguards are in place in the asylum adjudication process to remediate any abuses committed by strongly prejudiced immigration officers?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Josh Hawley
United States Senator